

# Paula's Pizza Party

by RV Staff Writer J.C.

Paula and her father strolled down the aisles of the grocery store. Her mother was away for the day, and the two of them were trying to pick out something to make for dinner together.

Paula didn't know how to cook, but her father was pretty good at simple meals like spaghetti or chicken fingers or tacos. Today, however, Paula wanted to try something different.

As they passed the deli counter, her father stopped suddenly. He pointed, and Paula saw a bag containing a blob of soft white dough. "What's that?" she asked. It looked weird.

"That's pizza!" her father said.

Paula laughed. "No, it isn't, Dad!"

"Yes, it is. That's what the dough looks like before it's baked. Let's make our own pizza at home tonight!"

Excited, Paula picked up the bag of dough. She squished it a little in her hand. It felt strange. "Okay..." she replied, but she wasn't so sure this was going to turn into a proper pizza.

"Let's pick out our favourite toppings next," said Dad. "What do we need first?"

"Cheese?" guessed Paula.

"Yes, cheese, and we must not forget the tomato sauce too." They wheeled their cart to gather a can of sauce and a bag of shredded mozzarella cheese. "What comes next?"

"I like pepperoni," suggested Paula.

"Of course," agreed her father. "It isn't really a pizza without pepperoni!" He found some already sliced and ready, and put it in their cart. "Now we need a healthy vegetable."

Paula wasn't too sure what would taste good on a pizza. She liked carrots, but she had never seen them on a pizza. Broccoli didn't seem right either. "Maybe green pepper?"

"Perfect," said her father. "And a few mushrooms, too, okay?" The girl nodded.

"Let's do it!" The pair headed for the checkout and took their groceries home.

After they washed their hands, her dad took out a flat baking sheet, and sprinkled it with some flour so it wouldn't stick. He opened the bag of dough and gave it to Paula.

"You can flatten out and stretch the dough so that it fits on this pan," he instructed. It was harder to do than it looked on TV cooking shows, thought Paula. She tried to stretch out the gooey dough, but her fingers would poke holes in it. She tried to flatten it but the dough wanted to slide back into a ball shape.

"This isn't easy," she grumbled.

"Hmm, try again," said Dad. "Maybe we need to sing a song to get it to listen to us." Paula thought her father was crazy. He was always coming up with nutty ideas like that. In a loud, dramatic voice, he began to sing.

"When the moon hits your eye like a big pizza pie, that's *amore* ..."

"What's *amore*?" Paula asked her father.

"*Amore* means love in Italian," he explained. "Sing it with me!" He taught her a few more lyrics, and together they sang, tossing the dough into the air and gently stretching it out to fit the pizza pan.

"See, it just needed to be serenaded," laughed her father.

"What does that mean?" asked Paula. She liked learning new words.

"Look it up," he replied. So, she did. Paula planned to use the word the next time she could.

Once the dough had risen, they added the toppings. First was the tomato sauce. Her dad showed her to spread it around but not right to the edges so your fingers wouldn't get messy when it was time to eat it.

Next came the mozzarella cheese. "Add lots," suggested her father. Paula didn't need to be convinced; she took handfuls of the shredded cheese and sprinkled it all over. When she dropped some on the floor by accident, the dog gobbled it up, then licked his lips and wagged, hoping for more.

Paula then took the round slices of pepperoni and created a pattern on the pizza with them. After the pepperoni, her father topped the pizza with chopped pieces of green peppers and mushrooms to complete the job. They stood back to admire it.

"Only a few minutes in the oven, and we will have dinner ready," said Dad. "There might be more pizza here than we can eat. Maybe you should invite a friend." Paula agreed. Her best friend, Isobel, lived a few houses away. Paula texted her to come over, and received a happy face emoji in reply.

Soon, the doorbell rang loudly. "There's Isobel," said Paula.

"That was fast," laughed her father as they welcomed the girl into the house.

"I don't joke around when it comes to pizza!" replied Isobel, smiling.

In a matter of minutes, the oven timer dinged. Paula's father put on oven mitts and removed the baked pizza, bubbling with hot melted cheese and smelling like heaven. The girls set out plates and napkins and sat down at the table. Dad poured glasses of milk and sliced the pizza evenly into neat triangles with the pizza cutter. "It's too pretty to eat," he joked.

"I'll get you, my pretty," cackled Isobel, in her best Wicked-Witch-of-the-West impression as she took her first bite.

"This pizza is doomed," said Paula, laughing, sinking her teeth into her slice.

"It's sooo good," mumbled Isobel, her mouth full.

"It should be," replied Paula. "We serenaded it!"

**Questions**

1. Describe the pizza dough.
2. Put the pizza ingredients in the order they were added to the dough.
3. Paula looked up a word she didn't know. What is the meaning of *serenade*?
4. What kind of a personality does Isobel have? Support your answer with a quotation from the story.